DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 367 441 PS 021 924

AUTHOR Jacoby, Ruth
TITLE Improving Early Childhood Educators' Understanding of the Value of Indoor Play through a Teacher Training Program.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 80p.; Ed.D. Practicum Report, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attitude Change; *Day Care; *Dramatic Play; *Inservice Teacher Education; *Play; Preschool Education; Preschool Teachers; Questionnaires; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS Play Style

ABSTRACT

A practicum project was designed to retrain preschool personnel on the importance of indoor play and on their role during play sessions. Workshops and training sessions were developed to examine the physical environment of the classroom, discuss play theories, and review skills that children can develop during play sessions. Pre- and posttests, along with classroom observations of teachers and children, revealed that most teachers who participated in the intervention changed their views and practices regarding indoor play. Teachers became both more aware of the role of play in helping children develop physical, emotional, cognitive, and social skills, and more involved in the children's play to promote these skills. Rooms were rearranged to allow for freedom of movement in and around newly created theme centers. The children became more focused on their role-playing, more verbal with their peers, and more involved in imaginative situations. (Six appendixes provide samples of pre- and posttest surveys and classroom observation forms.) (MDM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 367 441

Improving Early Childhood Educators' Understanding of the Value of Indoor Play Through A Teacher Training Program

by

Ruth Jacoby

Cluster 49

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Ruth Jacoby
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A Practicum I Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

PS 021924

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Robert E. Kravitz

Robert Kravitz

Executive Director

Title

Coral Springs, Florida

Address

5-21-93

Date

This practicum report was submitted by Ruth Jacoby under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

May 21, 1993

Date of Final Approval of adviser Report

Roberta Y. Schomburg

Roberta Schomburg, Ph.D.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	v
Chapter	
I INTRODUCTION	1
Description of Community	1
Writer's Work Setting	2
Writer's Role	4
II STUDY OF PROBLEM	7
Problem Description	7
Problem Documentation	8
Teacher Questionnaire	8
Knowledge of Play	9
Lesson Plans	10
Teacher Observation	10
Student Observation	11
Teacher Survey	11
Relationship of Problem to Literature	12
Definition of Play	12
History of Play	13
Play Theories	13
Causative Anaylsis	15
III ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS	20
Goals and Expectations	20
Expected Outcomes	20
Measurement of Outcomes	21
IV SOLUTION STRATEGY	24
Problem and Solution Statement	24
Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions	24
Solution Strategies-Teacher Training	24
Solution Strategies-Increase Length of Indoor Play Sessions	28
Description of Selected Solution	29
Report of Action Taken	32
V RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	38

Results..... 38
Discussion..... 48
Recommendations..... 53
Disseminaton..... 54

REFERENCES..... 56

Appendices Page

A STAFF SURVEY..... 59

B CHILDREN'S OBSERVATION..... 61

C PARENT PERMISSION FORM AND INFORMATION LETTER.. 64

D TEACHER PRE AND POSTTEST BASED ON N.A.E.Y.C.'S THEORIES..... 67

E PRE AND POSTTEST ON TEACHER KNOWLEDGE..... 70

F TEACHER OBSERVATION FORM..... 72

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1 Pre and Posttest Data Based On Children's Observation..... 40

2 Pre and Posttest Data Based on Teacher Knowledge..... 42

3 Pre and Posttest Data Based on N.A.E.Y.C.'s Theories..... 46

4 Pre and Posttest Data Based on Teacher's Observation..... 47

ABSTRACT

Improving Early Childhood Educators' Understanding of the Value of Indoor Play. Jacoby, Ruth., 1993: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Inservice Training/Nursery School/Day Care

This practicum was designed to retrain preschool personnel on the importance of indoor play and their role during play sessions. Workshops were organized by the writer and two were presented by a professional community leader. Attendance at the workshops included staff, parents, and educators from neighboring nursery schools.

The writer developed training sessions which included reviews of room arrangements, play theories, and skills children learn through play. Teachers were encouraged to role play and be video taped in order to improve their skills on the method of play intervention. The writer also administered both pre and posttests and observations to all participants.

Analysis of the data revealed that the teachers who participated changed their role to include outside and inside intervention. Teachers, who increased their knowledge about play, changed their attitude and placed 30 minute play sessions into their daily curriculum schedules. Rooms were rearranged to allow for freedom of movement in and around the newly created theme centers. Children in the longer play sessions became focused on their role-play, more verbal with their peers, and more involved in imaginative situations.

****

Permission Statement

As a student in the Ed.D Program in Child and Youth Studies, I do (X) do not ( ) give permission to Nova University to distribute copies of this practicum report on request from interested individuals. It is my understanding that Nova University will not charge for this dissemination except to cover the costs of microfiching, handling, and mailing of the materials.

April, 93
date

Ruth Jacoby
(signature)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The writer works in a preschool that offers programs for children that are 18 months to five years. The population is mostly made up of children of the Jewish faith who come from a two parent home. The majority of parents are middle to upper middle class. Ninety percent of the mothers do not work. Some of the children are escorted by nannies.

Description of Community

The preschool is situated in a suburban area of the southeastern part of the United States. It is positioned approximately 20 minutes from the Atlantic Ocean. The city's population, as of 1991, is nearing 80,000. This makes it the third largest city in the county. Eighty-six percent of the 29,000 households are families. Twenty-nine percent of the population is between birth and 17 years of age. Thirty point two percent of the citizens are school age children. This city has 37 parks on a total of 502 acres. There are 600 sports teams and 16 public schools. The median age of the residents is 30 ("Annual Report,"

1991). This city has the highest median household income in the county. There are approximately 2,200 businesses and 60 financial institutions. The total taxable property value is 3.1 dollars ("Annual Report," 1991).

Writer's Work Setting

During the 14 year history of the school, it has grown to include two full time teachers, five part time teachers, and five assistants. Every member of the professional staff is licensed and has college degrees. There is one assistant for each self-contained classroom. A ratio of no more than nine students per adult is maintained. There are two specialty teachers. One teaches music and dramatics; the other teaches an indoor gymnastics program. The full time staff, made up of three, are employed from nine to three. The rest of the staff works from nine to one thirty, when 90 percent of the students leave for the day. All staff members have met the requirements set by the state. There are two daily options given to the parents for their child. One is to stay until three or six, and the other is to arrive for the Breakfast Club at eight in the morning. The parent pays an additional cost for either program.

The school is unique because it is the only Jewish preschool in the area to achieve national accreditation from N.A.E.Y.C. (National Association for the Education of Young Children). Part of the school's uniqueness is that after three o'clock, one maintenance man turns the entire building

into a religious school for older students. This means that all art work and toys are packed and unpacked daily. Lots of damage does occur to the equipment and displays. The entire school is on wheels.

The original building has undergone a complete renovation to gain a fresh look. The outside playground has also been upgraded with new government approved climbing equipment and a water area for summer camp. A concrete road has been added for dramatic play, and a new sand surface now covers the play areas. There are four new classrooms being built adjacent to the original building to house new students as necessary.

Similiar to other preschools, the literacy curriculum is based on the whole language approach. The prekindergarten curriculum is based on a combination of whole language and phonics. The two and three year old classes are basically hands on programs situated around learning centers. Some alphabet letter recognition is taught as well. The day also includes art, music, stories, and indoor and outdoor play times.

The school's philosophy recognizes that a child's early years are extremely important. These are the formative years during which the foundation for emotional, social, and academic development of the children are strengthened. The early childhood program has attempted to meet the needs of the whole child. The children are involved in a wide variety of learning activities meant to enhance their

cognitive and motor development. They are motivated to reach their potential through many types of activities. This potential is developed in a warm environment where they can touch, see, hear, smell, and taste. Readiness in reading, math, social studies, language arts, and science is developed through individual and group activities. The staff encourages individuality, independence, and a sense of responsibility.

The school's curriculum also exposes the students to religious training on their own level. Through song, dance, and celebration of the holidays, the preschoolers develop an understanding of their heritage. The goal is for the students to grow comfortable with the words and traditions.

Writer's Role

The writer is the director of the described preschool. She has 12 years teaching experiences on all grade levels and has been an administrator for five years. Her undergraduate work was in art and education. She obtained her Masters in special education 20 years ago. Since then, the writer has taken many courses and has attended various educational seminars that increased her knowledge of curriculum and current educational trends. The present nursery budget allows her to attend two major conferences a year. She holds State Certification in early childhood, elementary, and special education.

As a preschool administrator, the writer is in charge

of controlling the 12 member staff, developing school curriculum, and maintaining the budget. A major function of the director is to report to the executive director, executive board, and a nursery school committee. The executive board is made up of local business people who handle the financial aspect of the school's operations. The nursery school committee, composed of preschool parents, handles the day to day operation of the plant.

The first major change that the writer accomplished at the job site was to formalize a parent organization. She felt that the parents needed a positive direction to assist them in getting involved on all levels of the school's daily functioning. Offering a variety of programs and workshops, in addition to traditional fundraising, left the parents an option of how much or how little they gave to their youngster's school. Once the organization's ground rules were set, the administrator moved on to become the advisor. When the parents requested a workshop, the writer would organize one.

A major task the writer has to achieve yearly, is to shape and participate in a total organizational retreat. Part of the preparation is to formulate the nursery school budget along with a five year plan. At the conclusion of each retreat, the organization develops its mission statement and each branch submits their own vision. Part of that vision includes a study of changes in environmental and educational trends.

In an effort to increase her organizational and managerial skills, the problem solver has help establish an adult diabetic support group. Each member is responsible on a rotation basis for the monthly topic and location. It is at these meetings, that the writer's communication and listening skills have been improved.

The writer has demonstrated excellence in her field. She has drawn up two children's books that are being professionally illustrated. One book is about a special little preschool mouse who works hard at play. At first her father does not understand the concept of play, so the mouse sets out to teach him all about it. The second proposed story is about the same character who develops juvenille diabetes.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The problem identified for this practicum was that dramatic play had disappeared from the classrooms in the writer's setting. The teachers seemed to have forgotten that play enhances the social, physical, emotional, and intellectual development of their students (Brown & Briggs, 1989). Play enables children to be individuals and develop at their own speed. Their language skills, their ability to incorporate their environment into their inner self, and their self-esteem are built up during play. With all the above benefits of play noted, the question remains as to why it became a secondary factor in early childhood curriculum at the writer's school.

It had become evident that teachers in the writer's school lacked the knowledge about the importance of long periods of indoor play in their preschool classrooms. Play had been used as a short activity until all the students arrived or as an after lunch activity for those students who finished before the others. Free play was viewed by the instructors as a fill-in session until the speciality teacher arrived. The children were not being given enough

time to grow in an environment that encouraged them to be creative, to socialize, and to learn through play.

The curriculum was based on reading and math readiness centers mixed with teacher directed lessons that were usually followed up with art projects or writing exercises according to age capabilities. Parents had expected papers and art work to be sent home daily as a means of reporting their child's progress. Due to this pressure, teachers stressed staff-directed academic whole class lessons with learning centers. The primary function of the centers were to reinforce skills already taught. With the emphasis on learning, the preschool rooms contained only two sociodramatic centers which were a housekeeping corner and a block center nearby.

The teachers, as well as parents, had bought into the concept that early academics and learning centers were important components of the early childhood program. Both groups believed that the early childhood center's main focus should be to prepare the children for success in kindergarten. Mass media, such as television shows like Sesame Street, and computer companies have further encouraged this viewpoint.

Problem Documentation

Teacher Questionairre

To document the specific problem at the writer's work setting, teachers were asked to complete a pretest of their

knowledge of play theory, the function play had in developing cognitive and social skills, and the teachers' role during play. Statements were taken from N.A.E.Y.C.'s book Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age Eight (Bredekamp, 1991). The evidence showed that three out of the four teachers scored correctly on more than one half of the statements. The teachers agreed in theory with the developmentally appropriate practices for play. All four teachers scored incorrectly on the questions that dealt with the teacher's role as a facilitator and that teachers should not assist during play. There were indications that the staff understood, in theory, and agreed with the importance of play, but did not see the connection with dramatic play as shown on the incorrectly answered questions.

Knowledge of Play

Out of the 15 questions on the true false pretest, three out of four teachers scored ten or better. One teacher scored lower than eight correct responses. Three out of the four staff members had some knowledge of Piaget, but none had heard of Smilansky. Smilansky's theories were not as well-known in the 70's. All four believed there was a correlation between play and learning. Yet, all four teachers had answered that play in their room is used as a filler time and should have incorporated teacher-directed hands-on manipulatives. Both pretests showed an inconsistency between how the teachers felt about indoor

play and what they actually practiced in their classrooms.

Lesson Plans

Educators at the writer's worksite did not have planned indoor play sessions in their daily schedules. There were half hour outdoor play periods written in the plan books and an indoor gymnastics scheduled on the three days a speciality staff member visited. The concept of indoor play was not integrated into the curriculum as a method of developing necessary developmental skills. Children were not given enough time to be creative, to be social, and to learn through play.

Teacher Observation

All the teachers showed a lack of play expertise. Observations were recorded on a table designed by Christie which was based on Smilansky's theories (Christie, 1982). The staff had been evaluated on the categories of (a) outside intervention (b) inside intervention (c) number of themes located in the classroom and (d) number of props found in the theme centers. The results had shown that all the teachers had only two centers. One, the housekeeping set had doll and kitchen play tools and the other, the construction set had both wooden and cardboard blocks. The only intervention recorded was to curtail misbehavior and loud noise. One teacher had brought in some new props to the existing housekeeping corner, and was in the process of developing a new center because a parent had donated a new cash register toy.

Student Observation

The need for new centers, increased indoor playtime, and teacher intervention was recorded by observation of the students. They were observed during one of the short indoor play sessions that had been found in the writer's center. The writer scored the 50 students on a chart based on Smilansky's Theories of Play. Forty out of the 50 pupils had exhibited either a slight knowledge or no signs of dramatic play.

Teacher Survey

The teachers had been given a survey that was developed to provide information on eight concerns of early childhood. Three out of the four teachers did not have college courses that dealt with the importance and components of indoor play. One staff member had some exposure that she felt was valuable during student teaching. The same four teachers had listed their play centers as, housekeeping and blocks. These centers were utilized by one group of children while the rest of the class was further subdivided into groups that attended learning centers found in the room. These centers, according to the instructors, were varied daily according to skills they emphasized or reviewed that day. They also concurred that they had 30 to 40 minutes of indoor play, but it had not been a scheduled period. Rather, it had been utilized in the mornings until everyone arrived and as a bridge between lessons. Sometimes after lunch, the teachers would have a short play time if the scheduling

permited. At no time were all classmates engaged in play for a significant length of time. Three out of the four teachers felt early academics was needed for setting the stage for future learning and that the academics taught were of upmost importance to the parents. Only one teacher expressed the concern that socialization was a top priority. Because of these beliefs, a minimum of 30 minutes had been spent on academics daily depending on the age group they were instructing. Computer usage was also considered an important part of the curriculum. Its importance was felt to be necessary since it exposed students to technology, eye-hand coordination, and small group interaction.

Relationship of Problem to Literature

Definition of Play

Play has always been a major portion of every generation's life time experiences. We have all participated in play in one form or another. Each individual has their own idea of what play is. Many experts have attempted to define play. According to Webster's New World Dictionary, play is defined as "to engage in recreation, to take part in a game or sport, and to do as fun" (Guralnik, 1983, p. 458). Dewey explained play as "activites performed which are enjoyable, performed for their own sake and with ne end result in mind" (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1990, p. 248). Piaget explained play as "the vechicle of growth, the wheels of movement that allow him to

explore the world around him, as well as the adult world which he will become a part" (Mendoza & Rubin, 1992, p. 115).

It does not matter which definition of play a reader has followed. Each meaning takes into account that children learn through play. Since youngsters like to play, it only follows that they would remain at this type of activity for a long period of time (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1990). Play has been linked to creative thinking, problem solving, language development, reinforcement of old skills and the discovery of new skills.

History of Play

During the Middle Ages, children used play as a means of practicing and imitating skills exhibited by adults. They copied those skills of the knight's behavior they watched. Rousseau in the 18th century had described play as being natural and spontaneous (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1990). The Victorian ethic of the mid-1800s had separated work from play. Play was considered trivial. However, at about that same time period, Montessori was developing educational tools that explained a child's social and intellectual development. In addition, Dewey had started to promote play as an important part of learning (Seefeldt & Barbour).

Play Theories

The psychoanalytic theorists, Anna Freud and Erikson, believed play was a time when young children linked their

mature inner-selves and learned to behave in a socially condoned manner (Werth, 1984). Play situations allow children to work out adult behaviors and incorporate them to their inner expressions. Erikson's theories on play are sequential. According to Werth, Erikson first labeled infant behavior as autocosmic play or sensual perceptions (1984). The next stage, he named micro-play. This stage of play is exhibited when a child plays with toys in a make-believe manner. The next level is titled macro-play. Children at this stage play by taking on pretend roles.

Piaget was a cognitive developmental theorist. His theory of intellectual development is divided into four stages (Werth, 1984). The first phase is called sensorimotor where infants (birth to two years) enjoy learning new motor skills. It is at this level, Piaget's play theory emerges. The first step has been named practice or imitation play. The second phase of intellectual development is the preoperational (two to seven years) when symbolic play develops. At this time, a child pretends that one object becomes something else (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1990). As play matures, it becomes better known as sociodramatic which is Piaget's second step in his play theory. The child has taken on a pretend role and uses symbols for objects that are not actually present (Christie, 1982). Next is the concrete level (7 to 11 years) and the last is formal operations (11 years and up). Piaget's last phase of his play theory, games with rules, appeares at the

concrete level.

Vygotsky believed that sociodramatic play was important for children's cognitive development (Christie, 1982). He, along with Piaget, felt that this type of play was needed for the later development of creative thinking (Christie, 1980). He suggested that children pretend by using objects interchangeably to create a reality that may exist in only the mind of the child.

A study by Parten (1933) reported that sociodramatic play emerges in children approximately at the age of three. It is in this type of play that an awareness of other children developes. Communication begins and each participant interacts with their peers. Parten's theory includes six stages of play. When one is mastered, the child then moves on to the next phase. The first phase is identified as unoccupied behavior (where the child is the watcher). It is followed by onlooker (where the child watches, but only shows some interest by asking questions), solitary play (where the child plays alone), parallel play (where the child plays next to one another), associative play (where children plays in small groups but still are involved in their own desires), and cooperative play (where the children play together and decide on rules and roles) (Werth, 1984).

Causative Anaylsis

The pressure has been on preschoolers to achieve. By

the year 1995, it is predicted that two-thirds of the United States' population six years old and under will have mothers that return to work. This statistic is up from 55% in 1986. More of these children are being placed in day care (Graul & Zeece, 1992). An increasing number of parents and teachers want these children to succeed in a competitive society. Mass media, educational textbook publishers, and computer companies have convinced educators and parents that early academics must be present in preschools. It follows that this new educational curriculum would help students develop the skills necessary for achievement in kindergarten and first grade. John Henry Martin, author of "Writing to Read" computer program, suggests that beginning reading and math skills at the preschool levels encourages pupils' natural curiosity and assists in obtaining success in the following years of school (cited by Glazer, 1988). Shows, such as Sesame Street, have encouraged parents and instructors to believe that early learning is fun and essential for nursery schoolers.

Prospective parents, when viewing the writer's school as a possibility for their child, look for technology in the classroom. Since computers are in their homes, they are expected to be present in the preschool. The writer often is questioned about computers and how often the children will work on them. Many parents are interested in after school computer enrichment as well. Newspapers and television advertisements encourage this attitude regarding

the use of the new technology. The teachers at the writer's work site had bought into the concept of early introduction of academics means later success. They had even turned their centers into direct learning experiences. No longer had play been an important part of the curriculum. It had almost became extinct or downgraded in value. In fact, it had become a filler for between lessons, for the fastest eaters, for the first arrivals to school, and waiting for the speciality teachers. Daily projects and lesson sheets were sent home to show parents the skills taught that day.

Christie and Wardle (1992) observed that some early childhood classrooms had a shortage of materials that were conducive to sociodramatic play. Teachers were not interested in play and its benefits for their pupils. These children had built simple block constructions, roamed aimlessly around the room without getting involved in dramatic play, and/or had exhibited simple parallel play with little or no communication with their peers. This had been the picture of the writer's school. In contrast, where play had been scheduled into early childhood centers, the authors had noticed that youngsters had the time to get deeply involved with each other and with their play equipment.

The staff's educational background had reinforced this philopsophy of education. Colleges taught early childhood educators that small group teacher led lessons were the way to educate. It had been presented in a recent article in

Dimensions magazine that everyone, including teachers and parents, had forgotten why children play and what is involved in play (About the Young Child, 1991). Early childhood eduacation had been thought of as watered down first grade and kindergarten curriculums (Feeney, 1992). Preschoolers were thought to be younger versions of their elementary level friends. Centers became academic learning corners to reinforce skills already taught. Children in this mode of learning had felt success, failure, and frustration. This in turn led teachers to identify some students as slow or difficult learners (About the Young Child). No one had thought to build a curriculum based on the needs of a two year old and expand from that base. Play had been ignored, even though it was known that three year olds were naturally curious and social (Bredekamp, 1991). Teachers had forgotton that early childhood programs should aim their activities to build positive self-esteem, to stimulate interest, to encourage communicative skills, to enhance creativity, and to encourage emotional development (About the Young Child).

Play periods had become a break between learning activities as well. The teachers at the writer's preschool were for the most part educated in the mid-1960s when the psychoanalytic theory of play was popular (Christie, 1985). This theory promoted the idea that young children needed to play. Therefore, the teacher's only role had been to act as an observer. Teachers and parents were taught that adult

interaction in child's play was not advisable (Graul & Zeece, 1992).

A teacher's role had been seen as initiating play and then walking away. Smilansky changed all that (Christie, 1980). She noticed that children's play skills in low socioeconomic areas were weak. Part of the reason, she concluded, was due to the lack of eduactors' knowledge on what their role was and how much time was necessary for play (Christie, 1985).

Smilansky's findings have started the educational pendulum swinging to a new position. It has become evident that early childhood educators would have to rethink their position on the definition of play, and how they could enrich the play environment. Research would be needed to assist in creating new attitudes and necessary for making changes.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goals of this practicum were to increase teacher knowledge on the importance of play and to assist new teachers in an understanding of their role during indoor play sessions. Secondary goals included helping educators understand the benefits of indoor play, extending the amount of time children play, and helping teachers become aware that their part in play was not just as an observer, but as a facilitator.

Expected Outcomes

The following goals and objectives were projected for this practicum.

(1) At the end of this practicum, three of four staff members will increase the amount of play time in the schedule.

(2) Three of four teachers will rearrange the classroom, implementing information gained in the workshops.

(3) Three of four teachers will make gains of at least four points on the posttest in questions related to the importance of play.

(4) Three of four teachers will make gains in their general knowledge of play.

(5) Three of four teachers will change their roles from observer to facilitator.

Measurement of Outcomes

Achievement of the first objective was measured by the teachers' schedules and lesson plans. These measurement tools suggested an easy method for the writer to notice any gradual changes in teachers' scheduling of indoor play sessions.

Pre and posttest children's observations were administered as an additional part of the plan to measure the increased indoor play time in daily activities. The writer chose Smilansky's theories of play because of its explanation of the various stages and its relationship to cognitive, social, and emotional development. According to Smilansky and Shefatya, there were positive correlations between sociodramatic play and later success in school (1990).

The second objective was measured by observations the writer outlined. According to Woodward, classrooms needed to invite children to want to play (1985). The writer inspected each classroom to notice if teachers created new theme centers and/or moved furniture to create adequate space for freedom of movement. In addition, the improvement in classroom setup was charted by each staff member on the

teacher's survey posttest. The writer selected an essay form for the teacher's to reflect on any of their individual changes.

The third objective was measured by administering two different pre and posttests. The first test was designed in the form of a written survey (see Appendix A). The teachers answered questions about the play corners. Such questions as how much time do their students have for daily indoor play, opinions on early academics and computers, teachers' college training, and if they intervene during play was categorized from their responses. This measurement was utilized to allow each staff member to report on an individualized basis their pre and postfeelings on the proposed questions. This format allowed for informal discussions between the writer and staff member.

The second pre and posttest (see Appendix D) was given to the staff in test form. The teachers answered the questions that tested their understanding of play and what they thought was developmentally appropriate based on N.A.E.Y.C.'s recommendations. This measurement was chosen to increase the teacher's awareness of what is approved by the school's accredidation agency. Each staff member circled the answer they felt they agreed with the most and was granted approximately 20 minutes to complete the form.

A pre and posttest (see Appendix E) was administered to the staff to demonstrate meeting the fourth goal. The teachers were given 15 minutes to complete the same 15 true-

false questions on the pre and posttests. This measurement design showed an increase in scores since the material was covered in the workshops. Comparison tables were formulated.

The last objective was noted and recorded from writer observations. A chart adapted from Christie's Table (1982) on Smilansky's theories was marked after each play session (see Appendix F). The observation included areas on outside intervention, inside intervention, introduction of new themes, and the introduction of new props. Permission was obtained from Smilansky. The observation lasted as long as the play period. The same chart was used to to evaluate the teacher's role during indoor play on a post observation. This measurement was decided upon for its easy method of scoring and because of Christie's simple explanation. Again the teachers were observed and marked in the same areas and on the same evaluation chart criteria:

0 teacher was an observer
1 teacher was slightly involved-input at least once
2 teacher was moderately involved-input one half the time
3 teacher was consistently involved

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Problem and Solution Statement

Thes problem identified for this study was that teachers did not understand the value nor their role in indoor play. Dimidjian (1992) states the following:

> Today we must be sure that play is central in the curriculum planning, delivery, and teacher preparation process. Young children who are communicative, cooperative players in their early years will most readily become the independent, thoughtful learners in the later years. Only by having teachers, schools, and educational systems that promote play as the young child's medium for learning will this be possible. (p. 84)

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Solution Strategies-Teacher Training

While working with children from a low socio-economic group in Israel, Smilansky and Shefatya (1990) discovered that skills of sociodramatic play were not as well developed as those of children from higher earning families. After they developed a scale to observe children, the question remained how to enhance play that would increase skills for cognitive and social development. The authors were concerned about:

(a) imitative role-play
(b) interaction
(c) make-believe with regard to actions and situations

(d) persistence
(e) verbal communication and
(f) make-believe with regard to objects. (p. 188)

These skills were exhibited in the sociodramatic play of two-and-one-half year olds. They were perfected by the age of four or five (Fein, 1979).

Christie's (1982) solution for enhancing indoor play was adapted from Smilansky and Shefatya's results. Their conclusion was to introduce play training, first to the teachers and then the students. Their solutions showed that the teacher's new role of intervening during play brought about a higher creative sociodramatic play. It became evident to the authors that before the teachers could intervene at any level of indoor play, they had to become knowledgeable about the components of play. In this manner, they could identify what skills were present or missing when doing an indoor play observation.

The solution brought about changes in the role of educators during indoor play. Teachers are now encouraged to intervene in order to enrich play. Again Christie (1982) expanded Smilansky's theories of teacher intervention. He describes two types. First is outside intervention, in which a teacher speaks to children in the role they have adapted. This continues the play session. The teacher remains outside the play; the child is still in control. Inside intervention is another form whereby the educator actually get involves in the play by introducing new pretend objects. In addition, teachers added verbal communication

during play activities to the students about their roles. Adding ideas to enhance play, taking on a minor role, and/or starting a play by declaring a new situation are often means that are utilized for intervening in play situations. In those situations the teacher is more involved in order to show the students how to improve their play.

Fein (1979) reported that Rosen did a study with two kindergarten classes. Results concluded that children who experienced play training exhibited progress in planning and cooperating with their peers during sociodramatic play sessions. Fein also suggested that once the students had demonstrated the necessary skills for indoor play, teachers could further expand their role by introducing new materials, realistic for toddlers and abstract for three year olds and older.

Teachers had developed new theme centers to enrich indoor play as suggested by Isenberg and Jacob (1985) in their study. Through observations by teachers, parents, and school administrators, it was found that imaginative play improved in quality and length. When the teacher had a discussion first about the new props and center, the students were able to incorporate the newly learned information into their play. They then expanded on it and incorporated it into their familiar experiences.

Christie (1982-1983) divided preschoolers into two groups. One group received tutoring in play; the other group in learning skills. Both groups were observed on play

quality (Smilansky's Table), verbal intelligence (Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test), and creativity (number of ideas and ability to adapt imaginary roles) during play. The students were given a pretest, posttest, and a follow up retest three months later. One group received tutoring in theme development. Outside and inside teacher involvement had been encouraged. Both sessions were exactly the same amount of time. Results showed both groups had gains in creativity and intelligence. The evidence concluded that the large amount of adult contact was the important factor to improvement shown.

A similiar study was performed by Saltz, Dixon, and Johnson (cited by Christie, 1980) on two groups of preschoolers. One group was tutored in thematic fantasy play (enacting familiar fairy tales) and the other group in sociodramatic play that imitated real-life roles. Both groups were given the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. Over three years, several different sets of preschoolers were used. Comparing the pre and posttest evidence showed an improved verbal intelligence. Again, teacher intervention was the important factor.

Collier (1985) ran a study where one group of teachers received training on how to observe children during play and how to help teachers learn how to become involved during play. The other group did not receive any training. Teachers were led in group discussions on time allotment for play in their classrooms, play materials, play rules, and

their involvement role. The conclusions drawn by Collier were that the teacher pretraining did bring about positive effects on the verbal scores of their students and that further training and studies be implemented.

Kabala (cited by Sapp, 1992) suggested an easy way to increase scores in her kindergarten class. She added story props to her play centers so the children could reenact the stories she had previously read. The students also added their own story lines drawing from their own experiences. Through observations, she noted that play lasted longer, more creative play emerged, and children who never played before became involved. Skills developed in the area of sequencing, cause and effect, immediate recall, categorizing, and language development.

Solution Strategies-Increase Length of Indoor Play Sessions

Hutt (cited by Curry, 1992) found that children need time to explore new toys and materials when they are brought into the classroom. Before creative play can begin, teachers had to allow students to fully discover each toy's characteristics and capabilities. Free play had to be extended to take the time needed for this exploration before dramatic play began.

Christie and Wardle (1992) observed preschool children in two settings. One 15 minute period and one 30 minute session. Rooms were well equipped and spacious. Results showed that in the longer play period children were found to

be more involved in total group activity, children who were shy had more time to warm up and join a play area, and play appeared to be more imaginative. Shorter play times found children wondering around the room or involved in simple parallel play. There was no evidence or committment to an imaginary play theme. Conclusions showed that early childhood classrooms needed at least 30 minutes of indoor play periods daily if possible, as well as a scheduled outdoor play. Other outcomes were the need for teacher training on their role, as well as parent training in the importance of play to skill development.

In a similiar study, Christie, Johnsen, and Peckover (1988) placed five year olds in two play sessions: One was 15 minutes and one was 30 minutes. The same toys were placed in both play sessions. Social interaction, dramatic play, and more mature play emerged in the longer period. Therefore, the same conclusions for longer play periods were drawn.

Description of Selected Solutions

Teachers received training to recognize and understand the value of indoor play and their role as facilitator. At a workshop run by the writer, the staff was shown how to rearrange their classrooms to enhance play and how to incorporate indoor play into their planned schedules (Feeney, 1992). Seminars and workshops were provided to increase teacher knowledge. Some workshops were run by

community professionals to help define the teacher's role during indoor play. The class agenda included role playing, as well as lectures. The two different seminars were three hour classes. The workshops run by the writer were 45 minutes. Both sessions encouraged teacher and leader dialog and peer interaction. Informal meetings were held with the director and staff to discuss teacher observations on their role during play and their views on the importance of play. This type of setting encouraged teachers to openly express how they felt they were interacting with their students. Teacher training was discussed and practiced during formal faculty meetings. The content at these meetings focused hands on involvement and encouragement for teacher input, as well as the lecture format.

Teacher training to enhance sociodramatic play in the writer's school was needed. All the teachers at the worksite were trained at least ten years ago if not more. Their past college education did not include the teacher as a facilitator, but as an observer. Teacher knowledge through workshops as suggested by Collier (1985), was one possible way to help the writer change the teachers' attitudes about the importance of indoor play. Measurement occurred before and after the implementation phase of the practicum on a test developed by the writer.

The writer conducted a workshop that assisted teachers in how to setup and arrange their classrooms in such a manner that invited play. In this informal setting, the

teachers were encouraged to participate in hands ontraining with flannel boards. It was important to remind teachers that the children need to feel at ease to move around and that each center be placed in a separate space so it had its own identity (Woodard, 1984). Kabula's (cited by Sapp, 1992) study, even though performed on a population of kindergarten students, showed that the same method can be adopted in the writer's school. Using the whole language approach to literature that was in effect, staff brought in new props that dealt with the story and phonetic sound of the week. Children and parents becme involved by bringing in materials from home as needed for the theme corners. Parents were invited to demonstrate their job roles. From these visitations, new theme areas were developed. For example, a veterinarian brought in some animals and demonstrated what he actually did during an examination. When a change occurred in the classrooms, it showed up on the teacher observations and survey posttests.

Christie, Johnsen, and Peckover's (1988) studies on the benefits of longer play periods definitely became an asset to the writer's center. Teachers, through children observations, recognized that the children became more involved in group interactions and imaginary play even at the age of two. Through informal discussions with the writer, the teachers started interacting and changed their role. After reviewing the progress children were making, educators wanted to include a longer play period in their

daily schedules. Since each teacher's schedule was flexible, the writer foresaw no problems with juggling a new schedule. The increase in time, was reflected in their written planbooks. The writer noticed the change when observing classrooms. Different from Smilansky and Shefatya's (1980) study, the writer's early childhood center school's population was made up of children from middle to high income families. Similiar concerns were the lack of teacher skills during play. Smilansky and Shefatya's study and results brought to light the skills and knowledge teachers needed in order to enrich their classroom play. Educators, through workshops organized by the writer, learned about the different types of intervention. Community professionals ran workshops using role playing as a means to demonstrate techniques for intervention. Progress was measured on a pre and posttest observation chart. Gradual changes were recognized by the writer as she visited each classroom.

Report of Action Taken

The writer first chose to hold a faculty meeting to discuss some background information on play and then followed it with a discussion on room arrangement. She used a flannel board that included pictures of indoor play equipment, room furniture, manipulatives, and theme centers. The teachers were given photocopies of the same pictures. Before beginning the instructional activity, teachers were

reminded to be aware of noise levels and student safety. After breaking into discussion groups, the staff designed rooms that placed active theme centers together and created walkways for safe and easy movement. Quiet activity areas were sectioned off in another part of the room. With these facts in mind, they created their ideal room design. The writer encouraged one area in the new room arrangement be left available for development of a future theme center.

The following two weeks included 2 three hour sessions run by a community professional. The first meeting focused on historical perspectives and developmental phases of play. The history of play theory was reviewed and included an emphasis on Piaget and Smilansky ideas of play. Each teacher was interviewed to gain knowledge of their job training and educational play background. The second half of the workshop's thurst was parent-child play interaction and instruction on how to asses children's play. The assessment's tool technique followed Smilansky's theories.

The same professional led the parent-child play interaction discussion by showing videos of parents playing with their children during play therapy sessions. The video focused on all types of parent interaction from nonparticipation to total domination. The teachers were then divided into groups and participated in role-playing activities. Each team was given a set of small blocks. The smaller groups were videotaped. The tape was reviewed and a discussion on how to play with a child followed. Both the

positive and negative aspects of the play interaction were reviewed.

To end the first meeting, the staff was given a homework assignment in which to assess two students during indoor play over several days. The observation included a checklist of the skills Smilansky felt were necessary for sociodramatic play (Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990). They were asked to then compare and contrast the pupil's play styles and abilities. The final part of the task included a paragraph on what the educator's role should be to assist the students, and what their role should be in enhancing play and prolonging play periods.

The second meeting reviewed the homework assignments which led to an informal discussions on how to intervene in children's play and how to emerge as a role model. Teachers were asked to assume a special role during specific play situations as part of the session in practicing their function during indoor play. The format also included a dialogue on how to discuss with parents the importance of play in their children's development and how parents can play with their youngsters to aid them in adapting social and play skills.

The next two weeks, the writer performed pretests and preobservations. The observations were performed on the teachers and their role-playing skills. The second observation was designed to detail the student's involvement in sociodramatic play. Several weeks later, these were

followed up by post observations. The first observations were conducted during short indoor play sessions of 15 to 20 minutes as part of the daily class routine; the second observations took place during whole class play of 30 minute intervals. The results of each were discussed with the staff at informal meetings.

The pretest given to the teachers included their knowledge on play, and on their value of indoor play. A teacher survey was also conducted. Each survey was analyzed for how the teachers felt about play, their backgrounds, and their role during play. At a general faculty meeting, their results were reviewed and changes in their classrooms were discussed. The discussions reflected Smilansky's theories, role intervention, and the importance of including a one half-hour whole class indoor play session.

Written invitations to parents to participate in Career Week were extended. Parents were encouraged to obtain a time slot from the teacher to come and speak with their child's class about their jobs. They were urged to bring in props and to leave them in the classrooms so new themes centers could be developed using the tools left behind. When two of the four teachers had difficulties solicitating parent volunteers, the idea for prop surprise boxes was introduced instead. Each box contained different theme materials used by secretaries, janitors, computer analysts, or woodworkers. A different box was introduced each day into the existing housekeeping corners. For example, the

secretary's box included a set of glasses without the lenses, an old typewriter, pads, pencils, and a phonebook; the janitor's box contained a feather duster, rags, and empty spray bottles. All these extra supplies were used to enhance student's creativity in the housekeeping area.

With these new additions to the original centers and the newly created theme centers, the writer next checked planbooks to see if teachers had indeed implemented increased time devoted to indoor play sessions. The writer was looking to notice if the staff wrote indoor play into their daily curriculum schedule. Planbooks were routinely checked.

At the last faculty meeting, the writer discussed results and the changes since the implementation plan. Teachers reviewed any changes they had developed in their classroom arrangements, their role in indoor play, and the time and frequency that they had allocated now for sociodramatic play. The teachers were encouraged to offer suggestions for further adjustments and variations to programming.

There was a slight deviation from the order of the original implementation plan. The writer felt that the flannel board rearrangement activity would be a great motivational tool to use as a starting point. She felt the teachers would enjoy being involved with a hands on activity that they could bring back to their classrooms with immediate feedback from their students. The workshops run

by an outside professional were moved up due to the availability of the work schedules. This change had no apparent effect on the implementation except to change the sequencing. The prop box idea was brought into the implementation after the writer attended an early childhood seminar. The concept appeared to fit into our Career Week activities. This allowed for teachers with nonparticipating parents an opportunity to enhance the theme centers each day which otherwise might not have occurred. Each room now had the occasion to increase a play activity in the sociodramatic center.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Teachers did not understand the value nor their role in indoor play at the writer's preschool. The staff needed to be reminded of the various skills children gain during long periods of sociodramatic play. They also needed to be retrained on their role of intervention during play sessions along with how to arrange theme centers in their classrooms. Teachers were too involved with whole class lessons that emphasized academics that they, along with the children's parents, felt were necessary preskill tools for later success in kindergarten.

To get started on the necessary changes at the center, the writer embarked on a retraining program. Workshops, pre and post observations, and guest speakers were part of the implementation program to bring the value of play back into the classrooms. For the changes to occur, each teacher was encouraged to escalate class play time from 15 minutes to 30 minutes. Room rearrangement, and development of new theme centers lengthened play periods and expanded child involvement.

At the end of this practicum, it was predicted that three out of four staff members would increase the amount of play in their daily schedule. Examining this goal was not difficult since the writer checked each teacher's planbooks and made class visitations every week. In fact, all four teachers rearranged their schedules to include a class indoor play session daily and wrote indoor play into their curriculum. The two full time teachers increased the amount of time for indoor play to three afternoon sessions as well.

At faculty meetings, the children's pre and posttest observations during indoor play intervals were reviewed. The pretest observation took place seven weeks prior to the post observation. During that elapsed time period, teachers attended workshops and had discussions at faculty meetings which led them to shift their focus from academic teaching to longer indoor play sessions. It was during those longer play intervals that the post observation occurred.

Table 1 represented the facts to show that there was an improvement in all areas of sociodramatic play. It was apparent that in most areas, 40 of the 50 students went from a lack of playing skills, nonparticipation, and limited verbal communication with peers to one sublevel up on the Smilansky and Shefatya test (1990). In five of the six major areas the number of students that had showed improvement were higher than anticipated. The area which had the least improvement was the persistence in role-play.

Table 1

Results of Pre and Post observations on Children's Play

QUESTION	PRETEST	POSTTEST	DIFFERENCE
1	9	16	+7
	19	25	+5
	22	9	-13
2	9	15	+6
	19	27	+6
3	9	10	+1
	21	27	+6
	15	5	-10
4	11	17	+4
	18	21	+3
	21	12	-9
5	9	18	+9
	14	15	+1
	14	12	-2
	13	5	-8
6	13	20	+7
	18	24	+6
	19	6	-13

All four teachers found the need to rearrange their classrooms to encourage children to get involve in longer play sessions. This outcome was better than expected. In

the beginning of the implementation phase, the writer declared that three of the four teachers would become aware of center placement. After the first faculty meeting, teachers went back and tried to recreate their ideal classroom. Walkways were clearly visible and space was made available between centers. Sociodramatic centers were moved away from library and learning areas. Teachers marked on the postsurvey that they increased their number of centers from at least two to three. In two cases, the teachers added two additional play areas. They also brought props into existing theme centers.

Three of four teachers would make gains of at least four points on the posttest relating to the importance of play was the third objective. The results in fact indicated that two teachers gained four points or better and the other two staff improved by only two points. This was lower than the original prediction.

Despite the actual numbers on the results all four teachers had indicated some improvement on their scores, though not as high as hoped. As shown on Table 2, the teachers on the pretest lacked knowledge about what play should include, when dramatic play should occur, and who Smilansky was. The posttest revealed that the teachers now better understood the components of sociodramatic play, the importance of play to their students' cognitive growth, and Smilansky's theories of play.

Table 2

Results of Pretest Data On Teacher Knowledge

Teachers															
4	x	x	x		x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
3	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x	
2	x	x	x		x			x	x				x	x	
1	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x			x	x	x
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

Numbered Questions

Note. x is the symbol for a correct response

Results of Posttest Data on Teacher Knowledge

Teachers															
4		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x
2		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
1	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

Numbered Questions

Note. x is the symbol for a correct response

The teachers also used a pre and postsurvey form to reflect on their changes on the amount of play corners, the attitudes of play, and their role during play. The survey was also designed to provide information on the teacher's background, education, and parent's expectations. The results are summarized to explain the changes that occurred.

1. Amount of Play Corners

a. Increase in all four rooms on the number of play corners. Besides housekeeping and blocks, the teachers added doctor, grocery stores, and dress up corners. Three added props to their original housekeeping areas.

2. Learning Centers

a. The three main centers: alphabet, math, and small manipulatives did not change. All four teachers did take time away from whole class academic lessons to lengthen play sessions.

3. Intervention

a. Pretest results showed all four teachers did not feel it was necessary to intervene to develop play. They felt children should play on their own.

b. Posttests showed a definite trend to make modifications. All four staff members stated that they used inside and outside intervention techniques acquired in the workshops they attended. The staff especially found intervention helpful with children who had difficulty entering play and communicating with peers. The intervention had to continue once the children were in play in order to show them how to play. Some of the teachers comments were: "Yes, certain children do not know how to play." "Yes, to help them learn social skills." "I also parallel play with the children. They are happy to see me playing."

4. Time

a. Posttest exhibited a change from short play periods to a minimum of 30 minute whole class daily sessions.

5. Computer

a. Teachers reported on both pre and posttests that computers were used in the classrooms.

b. Attitudes about the computers changed. All four teachers on the posttest now considered the computers usefulness for small group interactions, rather than academic learning.

6. Importance of Early Academics

a. All four teachers felt academics was less important on the posttest. They realized that play was just as beneficial to cognitive learning and socialization. The teachers' comments included: "Children learn at their own pace." "Children need social skills before academics." "Children catch up to each other in elementary school in spite of early academics." "Children develop and mature emotionally and socially at different times. They are ready for academics on their own timetable."

b. One teacher expressed that pressure from the parents caused her to emphasize some academics, especially since she was teaching the prekindergarten class.

7. Educational Background

a. All four teachers did not have college training on the importance of play to cognitive and social development.

b. One teacher did have a good student teaching experience that reviewed play for early childhood.

8. Parents' Attitudes

a. Parents still want academics.

b. Teachers did express that they did speak to the parents about the importance of play during parent teacher conferences.

Four of four teachers made significant gains in their general knowledge of play. This outcome was measured by presenting a pre and posttest based on N.A.E.Y.C.'s theories. It was clear from the number of incorrect responses on the pretest that the teachers did not understand the questions that dealt with what the role of the teacher should be during indoor play, nor did they understand the value of play. The posttest showed an improvement in those areas. This new comprehension was exhibited by an increase in correct responses (see Table 3).

Table 3

Pretest Data Based On N.A.E.Y.C.'s Theories

Teachers	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
4		x	x	x	x							x		x
3		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x
2		x	x	x			x		x	x	x	x		x
1		x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x		x

Numbered Questions

Note. x is the symbol for correct response

Posttest Data Based on N.A.E.Y.C.'s Theories

Teachers													
4	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

Numbered Questions

Note. x is the symbol for corect response

The last objective was for three of four teachers to change their role from observer to facilitator. This change was noted on Table 4. The comparison between the pre and post observations exhibited that all four teachers made an increase in the number of times they demonstrated outside and inside intervention. Results of zero and one showed that teacher number one did not buy into the concept of introducing new themes and props. Her theme centers contained the original housekeeping elements from the beginning of the school year. Her intervention skills improved from an observer to moderately involved. It might be necessary to have further informal meetings with this teacher or pair her with another teacher to assist in developing intervention skills. The remaining three teachers made greater strides and were consistently involved on all sublevels.

Table 4

Results on Teacher's Role in Indoor Play

QUESTION	TEACHER	Results pre A	B	C	D	post A	B	C	D
Outside Intervention									
1		0	0	1	0	2	3	3	3
2		0	0	1	1	3	3	3	3
3		0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3
4		0	0	1	0	3	3	3	3
5		2	0	2	0	3	2	2	3
Inside Intervention									
1		0	0	0	1	1	2	2	2
2		0	0	0	1	2	2	3	3
3		0	0	0	0	1	2	3	2
4		1	1	0	0	2	3	3	3
5		0	0	0	0	2	3	3	2
New Props									
1		0	0	1	0	0	3	3	2
New Themes									
1		0	0	0	0	1	3	3	2

Note. 0 teacher was an observer
1 teacher was slightly involved-input at least once
2 teacher was moderately involved-input one half the time
3 teacher was consistently involved

Discussion

Since beginning the three month implementation plan, the teachers have increased their awareness of the importance of indoor play and what their function should be

during play sessions. The first conspicuous change was the increase in time dedicated to daily whole class play. This change came about after the writer and her staff discovered during short play sessions that the children were not involved with social interaction and role-playing. Suggestions were made to increase the amount of time in order to bring about a change in students' play. This was similiar to the results found by Christie and Wardle (1992). During the shorter play periods, there was more parallel play, less involvement in role-playing, and less theme development. Christie, Johnson, and Peckover (1988) reached similiar conclusions in their research on play duration. The teachers were observed that the longer play periods allowed the children to develop cooperative skills since they had greater opportunity to discuss play themes and to determine who would be the chosen players. Larger number of children were formed into clusters in the different centers; groups of two or more emerged as the domineering interaction.

Before embarking on lengthening play in their plan books, the staff reworked their classrooms in order to make it safe and inviting for their pupils to want to play. Woodward (1985) agreed that classrooms need adequate space for successful play. The teachers achieved this goal by moving furniture and centers. One teacher decided that each child did not need to have a designated chair. Her whole class lessons changed from sitting at tables to the floor.

More centers were formed and pathways were made to allow for ease of movement from one place to another.

Now that the children had increased time, and the rooms invited play, the writer focused on retraining the teachers. After reviewing the staff preobservation charts, the writer had a community professional conduct two workshops. The teachers participated in many play situations to make them aware of how to intervene and how to be cognizant of the children who needed assistance. The teachers during informal discussions shared their concerns about gender and cultural expectancies. This came about after the teachers did their own child studies as a homework assignment. They became aware that the boys typically played with blocks and cars, and the girls were found in the housekeeping corner. They were also bothered by the fact that the boys and girls alike, were exhibiting very agressive behaviors by taking on the roles they had observed on television or movies.

This concern was not part of the writer's original agenda. It was determined that part of the teacher's role modeling and play intervention was to now encourage all students to actively seek out all play corners, not just the ones that were typically female or male. The staff also touched upon gender expectations. They wanted all of the members to be careful to avoid stereotyping. This awareness carried over to the techniques used for inside and outside play intervention. The writer suggested when thinking of new theme centers, the teachers should consider ones that

would encourage all children to participate.

Another unexpected outcome was the staff's concern that the parents were still pressuring for academics. Parents questioned the writer's newsletters which discussed the items (1) play for play's sake and (2) what skills are learned during play. The teachers, after attending the workshops, were better prepared to answer these questions. The staff shared skills learned about play with parents during parent conferencing. This was especially helpful for the teacher when trying to explain to the parents how they could assist in helping their child develop play and social skills. The teachers found that the observational tools used by the writer was a good tool for parent meetings. This helped parents better understand their child's progress. This observation form was adapted by the teachers to become part of their students' portfolio record.

Christie (1980) agreed with Piaget that mastering symbolic play was a requirement for abstract thought. The postobsevations revealed that three of the four teachers had increased awareness of their roles as a facilitator and as a role-model. They also became knowledgeable about the importance play performed in students' development. One staff member still had difficulty with inside intervention. The improvement for all staff members was higher in outside intervention. The writer found that more hands on faculty workshops would be needed to ease the teachers into playing with the students. Teachers needed to be trained so they in

turn could train the pupils on how to play.

The writer attributes the result of lower outcomes on the questions relating to the importance of play to the fact that the teachers were more interested in hands on workshops than the academic ones. Perhaps more workshops on play theories using multimedia would have created an increased interest for the teachers than a lecture form. Another workshop toward the end of the implementation might assist teachers on remembering actual theories.

Isenberg and Jacob (1985) felt teachers must introduce new props and become role-models because children learn through observation and need previous knowledge before adding on to their play. Woodward (1985) also stated that children needed background information to be able to reenact roles and settings. She had suggested outside trips within the community. The writer did not allow her students to leave the school setting. In order to enrich the existing centers and increase a variety of theme centers, the parents were invited into school for Career Week. They were also encouraged to bring in materials for theme ideas developed by the staff. For example, a grocery store was created after a parent spoke about her job in a local supermarket. Another parent left paper slippers, old x-rays, and a tuning fork so the children could simulate her husband's podiatry office.

The housekeeping areas were enriched though teacher intervention. The staff brought in surprise prop boxes

filled familiar articles. One box contained pads, pencils, glasses without lenses, and a broken calculator; a secretarial or business center was created. This concept for center development unexpectedly came about after the writer attended an early childhood seminar during the implementation phase.

When the writer reviewed the tally sheet to reexamine which students exhibited little or no improvement in getting involved at the theme centers or with their peers, she discovered that three were bilingual, two had just entered school, and two had shown difficulty in relating to their peers in general. The writer, along with the teachers, felt that these students should be watched carefully during play sessions so the teachers would intervene to assist them with the necessary skills for play. They also concurred that the parents might be made aware of these findings in order to obtain any necessary outside assistance.

It was obvious to anyone who entered the writer's preschool that the necessary furnishings were there for sociodramatic play. Yet, at the beginning of implementation, the teachers did not consider play as an important part of the curriculum for the development of their students' cognitive skills. It was also obvious when visiting the school that the teachers did not play with the children; play was not considered an important tool for learning or for teacher intervention. The class needed to have computers, academics, art, music, and outside play.

That was what was written in their plans. Indoor play never appeared. They needed to be retrained.

Indoor play only became important after the teachers attended many workshops. The school made a complete turn. Noticeably, the play environment had increased theme corners, new props, and proper center placement. Not only was the classroom appearance different, but also the teachers' role. No longer were they sitting and watching for behavior difficulties, but the staff was sitting on the floor interacting in the theme, or they were walking around the room talking with the young children. They had become involved to assist and enhance play. The staff had come to realize that play was an important factor in promoting the children's cognitive development. The writer had achieved the goals she had set forth.

Recommendations

As a result of this practicum the writer recommends the following:

1. Develop workshops for parents on how to play with their children and the value of play in furthering their child's development.

2. Preschools should include a minimum of 45-90 minutes of indoor play sessions in their daily schedules. If that goal is unattainable, lengthy indoor play times should be encouraged for three days a week.

3. Teachers should encourage parent involvement in the

development of theme centers.

4. Teachers at faculty meetings should continually share with their colleagues ways to enhance play themes.

5. Programs should develop a mentor program year round for new teachers which would stress the value of indoor play. Another type of mentoring would be to put teams together across grade levels acting as cooperative partners to assist each other on their role during play and ideas for play intervention.

6. Teachers should continue to add to the portfolio assesssment method any tools that might develop from watching their students'play.

7. Programs should add to teacher evaluation forms, the play observation tool used on skills exhibited on how they intervene, and on theme and prop development. This will demonstrate to the
teachers that the administration stresses play.

Dissemination

One unexpected outcome from implementation led the writer to conduct a parent workshop. It focused on the importance of play and how to interact with children, not at them. Parents were led through exercises on play by building with a partner. The writer went around to the small goups helping them develop skills by giving suggestions. The parents requested a follow-up meeting.

The writer has developed a children's book about a

mouse who convinces her father that play is important. The book was submitted to a publisher. She has also written articles for magazines about retraining teachers on the value of indoor play and is waiting for responses. She is under consideration to present a workshop in September for the Southern Association for Young Children.

During the summer, while attending Nova University's Summer Institute in Washington, DC, the writer was invited to be on a practicum panel group. The main focus of the discussion will be to give fellow students some tips on how to be a problem solver. The writer's responsibility for the panel is to discus how she came about selecting the topic, any unexpected roadblocks that she might have encountered during implementation, and how she worked them out.

References

About the young child at elementary school. (1991, Winter). Dimensions, pp. 3-4.

Bredekamp, S. (Ed.). (1991). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children birth through age eight (7th ed.). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Brown, D. L., & Briggs, L. D. (1989). Free play in the early childhood classroom. Reading Improvement, 26(1), 12-14.

Christie, J. (1980). Play for cognitive growth. Elementary School Journal, 81(2), 115-118.

Christie, J. (1982, May). Sociodramatic play training. Young Children, pp. 25-31.

Christie, J. (1982-1983). The effects of play tutoring of young children's performance. Journal of Educational Research, 76(6), 326-330.

Christie, J. (1985). Training of symbolic play. Early Child Development and Care, 19, 43-52.

Christie, J., Johnsen, E., & Peckover, R. (1988). The effects of play period duration of children's play patterns. Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 32, 123-131.

Christie, J., & Wardle, F. (1992, March). How much time is needed for play? Young Children, pp. 18-31.

Collier, R. (1985). The results of training preschool teachers to foster children's play. Association for Childhood Education, 305-311.

Curry, N. (1992). Four and five year olds: Intuitive, imaginative players. In V. J. Dimidjian (Ed.), Play's place in public education for young children (pp. 37-48). Washington, DC: National Education Association of the United States.

Dimidjian, V. J. (1992). Introduction. In V. J. Dimidjian (Ed.), Play's place in public education for young children (pp. 81-84). Washington, DC: National Education Association of the United States.

Feeny, S. (1992). Play's place in teacher education. In V. J. Dimidjian (Ed.), Play's place in public education for young children (pp. 155-165). Washington, DC: National Education Association of the United States.

Fein, G. (1979, July). Research in review: Pretend play. Young Children, pp. 61-66.

Fein, G. (1992). Play and development. In V. J. Dimidjian (Ed.), Play's place in public education for young children (pp.27-36). Washington, DC: National Education Association of the United States.

Glazer, S. (1988, February), Preschool; Too much too soon? Educational Research Reports, pp. 54-60.

Graul, S., & Zeece, P. (1992, Spring). Helping adults learn the importance of play. Dimensions of Early Childhood, pp. 18-39.

Guralnik, D. (Ed.). (1987). Webster's new world dictionary. NY: Warner Books.

Isenberg, J., & Jacob, E. (1985, March-April). Playful literacy activities and learning: Preliminary observations. Childhood Education, pp. 17-20.

Mendoza, A., & Rubin, J. (1992). Checklist challenge for primary classrooms. In V. J. Dimidjian (Ed.), Play's place in public education for young children (pp. 115-124). Washington, DC: National Educational Association of the United States.

Parten, M. B. (1933). Social participation in preschool children. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 28, 136-147.

Sapp, M. (1992). In best interest of children: Returning play to its place. In V. J. Dimidjian (Ed.), Play's place in public education for young children (pp. 49-62). Washington, DC: National Education Association of the United States.

Seefeldt, C., & Barbour, N. (1990a). Child growth and development. Early childhood education (2nd Ed.). (pp. 28-63). Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing Company.

Seefeldt, C., & Barbour, N. (1990b). Play. Early childhood education (2nd Ed.). (pp. 248-276). Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing Company.

Smilansky, S., & Shefatya, L. (1990). Facilitating play: A medium for promoting cognitive, socio-emotional and academic development in young children. MD: Psychosocial & Educational Publications.

Staff. (1991, Winter) About the young child at elementary school. Dimensions, pp.3-4.

Werth, L. (1984). The many faces of play. Early Child Development and Care, 17, 3-12.

Woodard, C. (1984, January-February). Guidelines for facilitating sociodramatic play. Childhood Education, pp. 172-177.

APPENDIX A

STAFF SURVEY

Teacher Survey

1. How many play corners are there in your classroom? List them.

_____

_____

2. How many learning centers do you have? List them.

_____

_____

3. Do you intervene during indoor play? Why or why not?

_____

_____

4. How much time during the day is devoted to indoor play? to academic lessons?

_____

5. Agree or disagree? Computers are an important part of an early childhood program. Why?

_____

_____

6. Agree or disagree? Early academics helps children achieve success in elementary schools. Why?

_____

_____

7. Did you ever have an educational course that dealt with the importance of play? If yes, where?

_____

8. Do you feel that parents want the better part of the day spent on academics, rather than play? Why?

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

CHILDREN'S OBSERVATION

Children's Play Observation Form
(based on Smilansky, 1990)

Name_____ pretest date_____

posttest date_____

Score: Place a check next to the appropriate line for the behavior observed

	PRETEST	POSTTEST
1. Takes on a Role and Developes Themes		
_____	child carries out many different ideas and innovations	_____
_____	child takes on one role	_____
_____	no role playing	_____
2. Make-Believe with Objects		
_____	child uses words or actions to substitute for objects	_____
_____	child uses some words as a substitute, but still uses toys	_____
_____	no actions taken	_____
3. Make-Believe with Actions and Situations		
_____	child is imaginative and is involved in many situations	_____
_____	child elaborates in a single situation	_____
_____	no make-believe	_____
4. Persistence in Role-Play		
_____	involved for entire play period-single role or related roles	_____
_____	child developed some roles in a theme, but is interrupted	_____
_____	not involved	_____

Interactions with Coplayers

_____	plays and interacts the entire play session	_____
_____	plays and interacts for a few minutes	_____
_____	child is involved in parallel play or solidary play	
_____	no interaction with another child	_____

6. Verbal Communication

_____	communicates with another child discussing roles	_____
_____	communicates slightly with another child and leaves play area	_____
_____	does not participate	_____

APPENDIX C

PARENT PERMISSION FORM AND INFORMATION LETTER

Parent Permission Form and Information Letter

Fall, 1992

Dear Parents,

As of last February, I started the Ed.d. program at Nova University. One goal of the course work involved is my undertaking a practicum at my job site. A practicum is a committment to identifying a problem and trying to solve it through implementation of new and innovative programming. There will be several times during the program that I will solicite your help. I will be asking your permission to observe your child during indoor play sessions and inviting you to attend workshops.

My first new program will be on the importance of indoor play. I will be looking to report on the components that go into play and the socialization and learning skills the children acquire. The teachers will gain knowledge about indoor play and their role.

I do hope you will join us in learning all about the importance of play in early childhood and both our roles in making it effective for your child.

In advance, I would like to thank you for your cooperation and as always invite you to see me for further information.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Ruth Jacoby

Parent Permission Form

I give Mrs. Ruth Jacoby permission to observe my son/daughter while interacting in an indoor play session during school hours. My child's name and address will not be printed in any of the writings. I also know that I can speak with Mrs. Jacoby at any time about the program.

_____

parent's signature

_____ _____

child's name and class date

APPENDIX D

TEACHER PRE AND POSTTEST BASED ON N.A.E.Y.C.'S THEORIES ON DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Teacher Pre and Posttest Based on N.A.E.Y.C.'s Theories

Please circle the statement you agree with the most

1. (a) Children will succeed in school later on if preschools stress early academics.
   (b) Children should be allowed to be children; formal academics should start in elementary school

2. (a) Children learn math concepts when building blocks, measuring water, or cooking ingredients.
   (b) Children learn math concepts when working individually or in small group interaction through rote counting, watching the teacher, doing worksheets, and working with flash cards.

3. (a) Math, science, social studies, and reading readiness are best taught when they are viewed as individual, separate subject areas.
   (b) Curriculum should be integrated through meaningful activities.

4. (a) Children should experience art and music daily.
   (b) Children benefit when art and music are taught by a specialist at scheduled times.

5. (a) Prereading skills are developed through lessons on letter recognition and phonics. Reciting the alphabet and singing the alphabet song increase skill development.
   (b) Playing in the doll corner and talking with friends during block building help develop prereading skills.

6. (a) Practicing correct letter formation in workbooks assists in prereading skills.
   (b) Seeing their own stories in print assists in prereading skills.

7. (a) Children learn how to play from each other.
   (b) Teachers need to help children learn how to play.

8. (a) Teachers should prepare all lessons and direct activity.
   (b) Teachers should prepare learning centers for math, reading, blocks, dramatic play, and science. Children select their own activities.

9. (a) Children should be allowed to experiment and cut art materials themselves.
(b) Teachers should precut art materials for children so projects resemble a familiar object.

10. (a) Children are expected to answer with one correct response.
(b) There are many responses to the same question.

11. (a) Standardize tests are important for prekindergartners.
(b) Children should be evaluated by teacher observation.

12. (a) Teachers should help children develop skills for play.
(b) Teachers should encourage and demonstrate the use of toys, but not facilitate play.

13. (a) It should be up to the child where he/she wants to play.
(b) Teachers should encourage children to visit play corners daily.

APPENDIX E

PRE AND POSTTEST ON TEACHER KNOWLEDGE OF INDOOR PLAY

Teacher Pre and Posttest Knowledge on Indoor Play

Score: Write true or false next to each statement

_____1. Piaget and Vygotsky believe that symbolic play is a prerequisite for abstract theory.

_____2. Piaget believed that play is divided into two types- concrete and abstract.

_____3. Erikson's theories on play include a stage labeled sensorimotor.

_____4. Smilansky states teachers should not intervene in children's play.

_____5. Children learn best through direct sensory experience.

_____6. During long play periods, children engage in more constructive play and group dynamic play.

_____7. Play periods should include teacher directed hands on manipulatives.

_____8. Sensorimotor stage of development as described by Piaget occurs when a child is about four-five years old.

_____9. Sociodramatic play is a type of symbolic play in which two or more children interact within the same theme.

_____10. Teachers can help improve cognitive skills of their students if they interact with them at play times.

_____11. Smilansky developed six elements of sociodramatic play.

_____12. Dramatic play should be used as filler time in the classroom.

_____13. Classroom space is important to facilitate dramatic play.

_____14. David Elkind's book The Hurried Child recommends the teaching of early academeics to ensure future success.

_____15. There is a correlation between play and learning.

APPENDIX F

TEACHER OBSERVATION FORM

Observation Form-Teacher's Role in Indoor Play

Pre and Posttest

(Adapted from Smilansky's Theories and Christie's Observation Table)

Teacher's Name_____Dates_____/_____

Score: 0 teacher was an observer
1 teacher was slightly involved-had input at least once
2 teacher was moderately involved-had input 1/2 the time
3 teacher was consistently involved

	pre	post
Outside Intervention		
1. teacher asked questions		
2. teacher made suggestions but did not join in		
3. teacher addressed child in role they have adopted		
4. teacher gave directions about roles and objects		
5. teacher gave comments designed to help one child bring another classmate to join in the play		
Inside Intervention		
1. teacher takes a role in the actual children's play and demonstrates what is missing		
2. teacher can bring an object in for make-believe		
3. teacher announces situation-Let's Pretend		
4. teacher demonstrates how to communicate		
5. teacher can add a story line to extend play episode		
New Props		
1. teacher brings in new objects to the center		
New Themes		
1. teacher introduces new themes		

Teacher Comments: List changes you have made in your classroom and in your teaching techniques (use the back of this sheet if so needed).

TEMPLE BETH ORR

July 28, 1992

Dear Dr. Smilansky,

I am currently the director of a preschool and a full time doctoral candidate at Nova University.

I will be writing my first practicum on the importance of indoor play in early childhood programs.

In your book, Facilitating Play, there is a diagnostic record titled Child's Socio Dramatic Play During Thirty Minutes. This chart would be extremely helpful in developing my concept. With your permission, I would like to use your chart as my observational tool when watching children interact. I hope my observations will show that the children in the longer indoor play time will have a better chance to interact and have time to develop their cognitive skills. Maybe then, I will be better able to convince my teachers and parents that indoor play is important.

Dr. Mary Ellen Sapp at the Nova program gave me your address. She suggested I write to you directly for your permission.

Thank you very much and I hope to hear from you as soon as possible so I may get started on my study.

Sincerely,

Ruth Jacoby

Mrs. Ruth Jacoby

9866 N. W. 19th Strret

Coral Springs, Florida 33071

Dear Ruth,
Please use any
chart you need.
Sincerely
Sara Smilansky

2151 Riverside Drive • Coral Springs, Florida 33071 • 305-753-3232